

[HRC46| Andorra UPR: Stop judicial harassment against Vanessa Mendoza Cortés](#)

23.03.2021

At the 46th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), during the adoption of the Universal Periodic Report (UPR) report of Andorra, ISHR and its Andorran partner, Stop Violències, delivered a joint statement calling on Andorra to fully implement the recommendations to ensure defenders can work in a safe environment without fear of reprisals.



In response to the statement, the Government of Andorra claimed that 'the Andorran justice system do [sic] not engage in any judicial harassment.' However, as the President of Stop Violències Vanessa Mendoza Cortés noted in the statement, she is facing [judicial harassment](#) stemming from her engagement with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and from statements to the press calling for the decriminalisation of abortion and improving women's rights.

On 17 February 2021 a hearing took place as part of the preliminary criminal proceedings against Cortés that are currently ongoing. The shadow report Stop Violències presented to CEDAW is part of the evidence. Cortés is facing charges of 'slander with publicity', 'slander against the co-princes' and 'crimes against the reputation of the institutions', which carry up to four years imprisonment and a 30.000 Euro fine.

ISHR is concerned that the Andorran government's statement during the UPR adoption did not indicate that the judicial harassment against Cortés will end, nor that the government will ensure her right to prompt and effective remedies.

ISHR and Stop Violències call on Andorra to:

- Drop all charges against Cortés, and refrain from bringing additional criminal or administrative ones.
- Ensure that Cortés has access to prompt and effective remedies.
- Decriminalise defamation and amend the Penal Code in order to prevent undue restrictions of the right to freedom of expression and assembly.
- Legalise abortion, as recommended by The Netherlands and France.

Read the [full statement](#) here and video below (English with Spanish subtitles):

Photo: UN Web TV